

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

OMB-01 IO-10 OPR-02 A-01 EB-07 AGR-10 /114 W

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R 291150Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4124

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

CDR USSAG NKP

MACTHAI BANGKOK THAI/J-3

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 3829

KUALA LUMPUR FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: CABINET DISCUSSES USAID DISSOLUTION AND
ROUTE 13 OPENING

1. AT WEEKLY PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 29, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN
OUDAY SOUVANAVONG SAID LAO CABINET HELD THREE-HOURS
MEETING MAY 28. HE STATED THAT FOLLOWING ISSUES WERE
DISCUSSED.

2. USAID DISSOLUTION: OUDAY SAID THAT MINISTER OF
ECONOMY AND PLAN SOTH PHETRASY HAD GIVEN CABINET A
"DETAILED REPORT" ON HIS NEGOTIATION WITH US REPRESENTATIVES
CONCERNING USAID WHICH HAD RESULTED IN THE AGREEMENT SIGNED
MAY 27 (VIENTIANE 3777).

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3. ECONOMIC SITUATION: OUDAY STATED THAT CABINET IS "VERY CONCERNED" ABOUT CURRENT LACK OF RICE AVAILABLE IN LAOS; CABINET THEREFORE DECIDED TO BUY RICE AND PADDY FROM MERCHANTS IN VIENTIANE AND TO SELL IT TO THE POPULATION AT A LOSS. HE ADDED THAT LAOS IS ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING RICE FROM THAILAND AND PRC.

4. ROUTE 13 REOPENING: OUDAY STATED THAT CABINET REQUESTED PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY TO STUDY POSSIBILITY OF REOPENING ROUTE 13 ASAP. HE NOTED THAT PRC IS BUILDING ROAD FROM NORTHERN LAOS TO LUANG PRABANG AND THAT, WITH THE REOPENING OF ROUTE 13, LAOS WILL BE REUNITED FROM NORTH TO SOUTH.

5. LAOS DOESN'T WANT THAI PROVINCES OR EMERALD BUDDHA: OUDAY FORMALLY DENIED RUMORS TO THE EFFECT THAT LAOS WANTS TO CONTROL SIXTEEN PROVINCES OF NORTHEAST THAILAND AND REPOSSESS THE FAMOUS EMERALD BUDDHA WHICH IS NOW IN BANGKOK. HE CALLED SUCH RUMORS "VERY TENDENTIOUS" AND SAID THEY WERE INTENDED TO CREATE MISUNDERSTANDINGS BETWEEN LAOS AND THAILAND.

6. LPF DON'T WANT TO CONTROL LAOS: OUDAY DENIED SECOND RUMOR THAT LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT (LPF) INTENDS TO TAKE COMPLETE CONTROL OF LAOS. HE REVIEWED HISTORY OF 1973 ACCORDS, NOTING THAT TWO YEARS HAVE PASSED AND IT IS TIME FOR COUNTRY TO TAKE A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF ITS PRINCIPAL GOAL -- REUNIFICATION. HE ADDED THAT LPF HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO A GOVERNMENT OF "UNION" EVEN AFTER AN ELECTION AND THUS, BY IMPLICATION, HAS NO DESIRE TO DOMINATE THE COALITION.

7. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: ASKED ABOUT CABINET REPLACEMENTS, OUDAY STATED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS STILL KEEPING SECRET THE NAMES OF SUCH REPLACEMENTS. HE SAID THERE MIGHT BE AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT NEXT WEEK.
CHAPMAN

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